

What is claimed is:

1. In a network including a communication center and a plurality of clients and client devices, a system for enhancing ability of real or robotic agents of the communication center to service clients using the client devices, including configuring call-back options, the system comprising:

customer presence software executing at the client devices for monitoring client and device status; and

a communication-center presence software executing in the communication center for receiving information from the customer presence software;

characterized in that the customer presence software at each client device monitors status at each client device, communicates status information collected to the communication center presence software, and the communication center presence software integrates the received status information and provides the integrated result to the real or robotic agents of the communication center.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein the network is a data-packet-network.

3. The system of claim 2, wherein the data-packet-network is the Internet network.

4. The system of claim 3, wherein the communication center markets products and or service to the clients.

5. The system of claim 4, wherein the agents are human resources employed by the communication center.

6. The system of claim 4, wherein the agents are automated robotic systems implemented at the communications center.

5 7. The system of claim 5, wherein the client-status information includes on-line/off-line status of the client and the client's callback preferences including medium preferences and device preferences

8. The system of claim 7, wherein an alert is propagated to clients.

10 9. The system of claim 8, wherein the alert indicates one or more of status of the communication center, including one or more of the number of calls in queue and the estimated waiting time, and a time for callback, enabling the client to plan or to initiate a call with high probability of success.

15 10. The system of claim 8, wherein optional callback or alert mediums include cellular, IP, and wired communications mediums.

20 11. The system of claim 10, wherein the optional callback or alert devices include cellular telephones, pagers, telephones, computer stations, handheld computers, and laptop computers.

12. The system of claim 1, wherein the client-status information provided to an agent automatically updates periodically.

25 13. The system of claim 1, wherein the client-status information is continually streamed to the subscribing agent-user during a session with a client.

14. The system of claim 1, wherein the transfer of client-status information is by instant messaging technology.

5       15. The system of claim 1 wherein the customer presence software executing at the client devices for monitoring client and device status is provided by a host of the communication center, and the communication-center presence software executing in the communication center communicates directly with the customer presence software executing at the 10 client device.

16. The system of claim 1 wherein one or more instances of customer presence service software are foreign presence service software provided by a third-party presence service provider, and further comprising a foreign presence service server operating in the network and communicating with both the instances of the foreign presence service software and the communication center presence software executing at the communication center.

20       17. The system of claim 1 wherein the network is one or a combination of the Internet network, a wireless cellular telephone network, or a public service telephone network.

25       18. The system of claim 1 wherein one or more instances of the customer presence software are provided by the communication center host, and one or more instances are provided by a third party presence service provider, and wherein two or more client devices executing presence software are associated with a single client, the communication center presence software

providing thereby regularly updated and integrated presence status over the multiple devices for the single client.

19. A method for enabling real or robotic agent-users of a communication center connected to a network to obtain current client-presence status information related to clients of the information-source facility comprising the steps of:

- (a) executing presence software at client devices used by the clients;
- (b) communicating client-status information by the presence software

10 to a communication center presence software executing in the communication center; and

15 (c) integrating the client-status information or a portion thereof and serving the result to subscribing agent workstations in the communication center.

20 20. The method of claim 19, wherein the method is practiced over a data-packet-network.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein the data-packet-network is the Internet network.

22. The method of claim 19 wherein the communication center markets products and or services to the clients.

25 23. The method of claim 19 wherein in step (a), the presence software executing at a client device is provided by a third-party service provider, and client status information is communicated through a third party server to the communication center presence software.

24. The method of claim 19 wherein in step (a), the presence software executing at a client device is provided by the host of the communication center, and the communication center presence software communicates directly with the client presence software.

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25. The method of claim 19 wherein in step (b), the communication center presence software operates in a call-waiting queue of the communication center.

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26. The method of claim 19 wherein in step (b), the client-status information is communicated in the form of instant messages containing the information.

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27. The method of claim 19 wherein in step (b), the client-status information is communicated through an electronic information page.

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28. The method of claim 19 wherein in step (b), on-line/off-line status information is communicated in the form of instant messages containing the information, and callback preference information is communicated through an electronic information page.

29. The method of claim 19 further comprising a step for alerting clients as to an estimated time of response from agent in a callback situation.

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30. The method of claim 19 further comprising a step for alerting clients as to status of the communication center, including one or more of the number of calls in queue and the estimated waiting time, enabling the client to plan or to initiate a call with high probability of success.

31. The method of claim 29 wherein the alert is of the form of one of a page to a paging device, an instant message, an e-mail, or a telephone beep.
- 5 32. The method of claim 19 wherein in step (c), the client-status information includes online/off-line status of the client and client's callback preferences are communicated to the communication center, including medium preferences and device preferences.
- 10 33. The method of claim 19 wherein in step (c), the client-status information automatically updates periodically during a client session.